

Michigan Celebrates AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH with Literature

WEEK 3

February 2021

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28						

The Michigan Department of Education and the Library of Michigan are excited to showcase African American authors and their literary works each week during the month of February in celebration of African American History Month. Seven authors and their works are featured and were selected from nominations submitted by educators for use by educators.

Student literacy increases powerfully as students see themselves (mirrors) and others (windows) portrayed accurately in their reading as presented in the work of Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop. By raising the consciousness about great African American authors from educators to educators and by lifting up African American authors and their works, we seek to create conditions for greater engagement with literature among Michigan students.

February

15

The Sun is Also a Star

Nicola Yoon

Age: Teen

Genre: Fiction

ISBN: 978-0553496710

Awards: Booklist Editors' Choice - Books for Youth - Older Readers Category: 2016

Coretta Scott King Award:
John Steptoe Award for New Talent (Authors)

YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults: 2017

Nominator: Stefanie Sedlar

School/District/Institution: Mt. Pleasant High School/Mt. Pleasant Public Schools

Incorporation in Curriculum:

"We read *The Sun Is Also a Star* in English 9 as part of our *Romeo and Juliet* unit. We compare and contrast this contemporary young adult novel with the classic Shakespearean tragedy. We analyze how the novel demonstrates the endurance of universal themes across time and cultures while also connecting to current events. The characters defy stereotypes, and their stories provide a mirror for many and a window for all."

February
16

Never Caught, the Story of Ona Judge: George and Martha Washington's Courageous Slave Who Dared to Run Away

Erica Armstrong Dunbar

Age: 9-12 years

Genre: Nonfiction

ISBN: 978-1534416185

Awards: School Library Journal Best Nonfiction Books: 2019

Nominator: John Hannon

School/District/Institution: Berrien Springs Middle School/Berrien Springs Public Schools

Incorporation in Curriculum:

"I read aloud to my students at the end of class using historically based books that feature young people who overcome some difficulty."

February
17

Brown Girl Dreaming

Jacqueline Woodson

Age: 9-12 years

Genre: Nonfiction/Poetry

ISBN: 978-0147515827

Awards: ALA Notable Children's Books - Middle Readers Category: 2015

Coretta Scott King Award (Authors)

National Book Awards: Young People's Literature

Nominator: Abby Zwart

School/District/Institution: Grand Rapids Christian High School/Grand Rapids Christian Schools

Incorporation in Curriculum:

"We read this book focusing on the idea of representation in young adult literature (mirrors and windows). We end by writing our own memoirs in verse."

February
18

The Watsons Go to Birmingham – 1963

Christopher Paul Curtis

Age: 9-12 years

Genre: Fiction

ISBN: 978-0440414124

Awards: ALA Notable Children's Books: 1996
Coretta Scott King Award: 1996
YALSA Best Books for Young Adults: 1996

Nominator: Renée Trent Kraft

School/District/Institution: Elmwood Elementary School/South Lake Schools

Incorporation in Curriculum:

"Used for over 20 years in my class - LOVED by all! Curtis captures the Civil Rights Movement and the hearts of all readers. MUST read!"

February

19

Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption

Bryan Stevenson

Age: Teen

Genre: Nonfiction

ISBN: 978-0812984965

Awards: ALA Notable Books - Nonfiction: 2015

New York Times Notable Books - Nonfiction: 2014

Nominator: Valada Sargent

School/District/Institution: Farmington High School/Farmington Public Schools

Incorporation in Curriculum:

"Our high schoolers were invited to participate in a book and movie club. We held two student-centered discussion sessions on this book before taking a field trip to see the film."

February

20

Tar Beach

Faith Ringgold

Age: 0-8 years

Genre: Fiction

ISBN: 978-0517885444

Awards: Coretta Scott King Award (Illustrators)

Ezra Jack Keats Awards: Ezra Jack Keats New Writer Award
New York Times Best Illustrated Children's Books: 1991

Nominator: Debra Blackmon

School/District/Institution: Old Redford Academy – Elementary/Old Redford Academy

Incorporation in Curriculum:

"I've been teaching the style and literary works of Faith Ringgold for several years. Her style of work infuses art and storytelling in her quilt designs and most popular book, *Tar Beach*. This book has been used in my art classes as a hook and inspiration to encourage visual art expression, using words and visual content that is created directly onto actual quilts and cloth canvas for works of art."

February

21

Look Both Ways: A Tale Told in Ten Blocks

Jason Reynolds

Age: 9-12 years

Genre: Fiction

ISBN: 978-1481438292

Awards: ALA Notable Children's Books - Older Readers Category: 2020

National Book Award Finalist: 2019

Nominator: Julia Orzechowski

School/District/Institution: Lowrey and Unis Middle Schools/Dearborn Public Schools

Incorporation in Curriculum:

"We have used this book to engage reluctant and non-readers in a weekly book club. We are meeting virtually to read and discuss each story in a low-stakes environment."

Thank you to all the Michigan Pre-K-12 educators who nominated African American authors and their literary works as well as how they used them with their students. Look for our next set of titles on Friday, February 19, 2021.